



New Heights in Learning: Results from the 2004 National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP)

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Defining Living-Learning Programs for the NSLLP

- Living-Learning Program Definition:
 - ✓ Programs that involve undergraduate students who live together in a discrete portion of a residence hall (or the entire hall)
 - ✓ Participants partake in academic and/or extra-curricular programming designed especially for them.
 - ✓ The variability of this definition allowed for great variety in the types of programs and campuses that were included in the study.

Living-Learning Programs as the “Miracle Cure”

- Living-learning programs created to fill tall order of improving undergraduate education
 - ✓ The “ultimate learning experience”
- Accreditation agencies expect campuses to provide data showing how they facilitate:
 - ✓ Analytical and information skills
 - ✓ Knowledge and cognitive abilities
 - ✓ Student attitude development and growth; life skills
- Yet, what do we really know about L/L programs?



A Quick Quiz:

Variety among Living-Learning Programs

- How many different types of L/L programs (e.g., Honors, FIGs) are there?
- What percentage of L/L programs offer courses for academic credit?
- Approximately how many faculty have a direct role in any one L/L program?



A Quick Quiz:

Living-Learning Environments & Outcomes

- Are L/L students more likely than students in the comparison sample to:
 - Enjoy a smooth transition to college? (*True/False*)
 - Use critical thinking skills? (*T/F*)
 - Have higher self-confidence? (*T/F*)
 - Have a stronger appreciation for racial/ethnic diversity? (*T/F*)

Background of the Study

- Assessments of living-learning programs have yielded positive but disconnected and idiosyncratic results
 - ✓ Most L/L assessment has been confined to single-program studies on individual campuses
 - ✓ Other national projects have studied *learning communities*, but none have focused specifically on living-learning programs
- New research is needed that identifies common outcomes across different types of programs and institutions

NSLLP Collaborators

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Introduction to the National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP)

- A four-year funded project by the Association of College & University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I)
- 2004 data collection included:
 - 34 universities
 - 274 living-learning programs
 - Approximately 24,000 student respondents

2004 NSLLP Participating Schools

- Arizona State University
- Bowling Green State University
- Central Washington University
- Clemson University
- Colorado State University
- Florida State University
- George Washington University
- Indiana University
- Louisiana State University
- North Carolina State
- Northeastern University
- Northern Illinois University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Purdue University
- San Jose State University
- Southern Illinois University
- Syracuse University
- University of California - Irvine
- University of Central Arkansas
- University of Florida
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Michigan
- University of Missouri
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of North Carolina at Wilmington
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Richmond
- University of South Carolina
- University of Tennessee - Knoxville
- University of Vermont
- University of Wisconsin
- Western Kentucky University

NSLLP Timeline

- Phase 1 (2001-02)
 - ✓ Comprehensive literature review
 - ✓ Annotated bibliography
(available on website)
- Phase 2 (2002-03)
 - ✓ Conducted pilot study at 4 universities
- Phase 3 (2003-04)
 - ✓ Survey administration at 34 participating institutions
 - ✓ Data analysis and custom report generation
- Phase 4 (2004-05)
 - Report of overall findings
 - Publications from 2004 data
 - Facilitate campus dialogues

NSLLP Conceptual Framework

(Astin, 1993; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003)

INPUTS → ENVIRONMENTS → OUTCOMES

- Demographics
- High school achievement
- Pre-college assessment of importance of involvement and perceptions of self-confidence

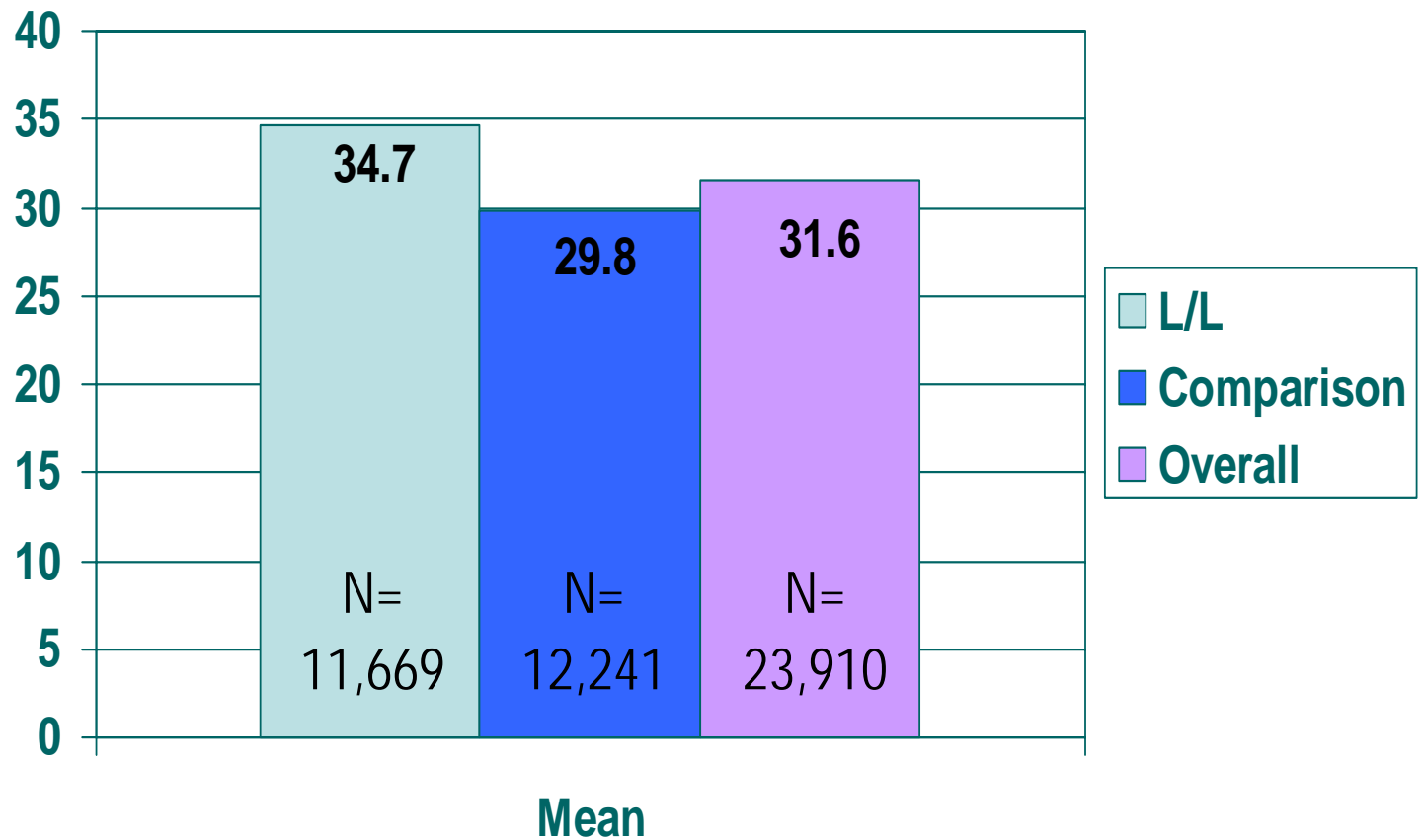
- Peer interactions
- Faculty interactions
- Co-curricular involvement
- Alcohol related experiences
- Residence hall resources use
- Residence hall climate perceptions
- Diverse interactions
- Campus racial climate perceptions
- Time spent doing leisure activities

- Academic and social transition to college
- Intellectual abilities
- Intellectual growth
- Perceptions of self-confidence
- Diversity appreciation
- Sense of civic engagement
- Alcohol use/behaviors
- Plans to return to institution
- Cumulative college grades
- Living-learning and overall satisfaction

Data Collection Protocol

- Each participating school selected random samples among:
 - ✓ All of its living-learning participants
 - ✓ Comparison sample living in residence hall
- Web-based survey administered January - March 2004
- Each participating school's primary contact also asked to fill out informational survey about L/L program components and structures
 - ✓ Ex: Number of faculty with direct role in L/L program
 - ✓ Ex: Is L/L program selective?

NSLLP Response Rates





Living Learning

2004 NSLLP Findings

Characteristics of L/L programs or LLPs

Characteristics of LLPs: Organizational traits

- ✓ 48% of LLPs have 50 or fewer students
- ✓ 66% of LLP students live in a reserved portion of a residence hall, with other non-LLP students
 - ✓ 31% of LLPs are in residence halls in prime location on campus
- ✓ 54% are selective
- ✓ 31% are funded solely by Student Affairs unit, 14% solely by Academic Affairs unit, 39% a mix of both
- ✓ 68% directly report to Residence Life/Housing unit



Characteristics of LLPs: Academic activities

- ✓ 73% of LLPs offer no courses for credit
- ✓ 78% offer no special sections of large introductory courses
- ✓ 51% have 1-5 faculty members with direct roles in LLPs
 - ✓ 33% have no faculty involvement
- ✓ 25% offer academic advising
- ✓ 50% facilitate study groups

Characteristics of LLPs: Co-curricular activities

- ✓ 50% of LLPs have no required co-curricular activities
- ✓ Among optional co-curricular programming, percentage of LLPs offering:
 - Team building activities: 50%
 - Cultural outings: 50%
 - Multicultural programming: 48%
 - Community service: 46%
 - Career workshops: 40%
 - Intramural sports: 33%



Living Learning

2004 NSLLP Findings

Results from student survey

All L/L vs. Non-L/L Students: Background Characteristics

- Majority of L/L participants in all programs are women and are first-year or sophomore students
- Racial/ethnic representation ranges by program
 - ~80% White: Eng/Computer Sci. and Honors
 - ~60+% White: Multicultural and Humanities
- Parental education and income more heterogeneous than assumed, but generally higher for L/L students
- High school GPA is almost all As and Bs
- SAT scores range by program type

All L/L vs. Non-L/L Students: College Environments & Activities

Higher Mean Scores

L/L Comp

	L/L	Comp	
Peer academic & social discussions	X		
Faculty mentoring relationship	X		
Faculty interaction w/ courses			N/S
Residence hall climate academically & socially supportive	X		
Plan on following in future:			
• Practicum/internship	X		
• Study abroad	X		
• Research w/ professor	X		
• Senior capstone/thesis	X		

All L/L vs. Non-L/L Students: Student Outcomes

	Higher Mean Scores		
	L/L	Comp	
Higher cumulative GPA	X		
Plan on returning next year	X		
Smooth transition to college	X		
Use critical thinking skills	X		
Stronger sense of civic engagement & empowerment	X		
Drink alcohol to less extremes	X		
Growth in cognitive complexity, liberal learning, personal philosophy			N/S
Higher academic self-confidence			N/S
Appreciation for racial/ethnic diversity			N/S

L/L Environments Associated with Critical Thinking Outcomes

After controlling for gender, race, SES, and HS achievement...

- Course-related faculty interaction
- Discussing academic issues with peers
- Discussing social/cultural issues with peers
- Studying in groups
- Position perception of residence hall climate for academics

Group Activity:

- With your neighbor, discuss the implications of the NSLLP findings for living-learning programs and their effectiveness in facilitating intentional learning.



2004 NSLLP Findings: Implications for Research & Practice

Differences in characteristics of L/L programs:

- Appears to be much variety among structural characteristics of LLPs, but most appear to be light on academic content



2004 NSLLP Findings: Implications for Research & Practice

Differences among L/L vs. non-L/L students:

- Preliminary data reveal that some facets of LLPs are working effectively:
 - Positive peer interaction & residence hall climate
 - Stronger transition to college, academic achievement, and retention
 - Higher civic engagement, lower binge drinking
- However, no significant differences where differences were expected:
 - Cognitive development
 - Self-confidence
 - Appreciation of racial/ethnic diversity



2004 NSLLP Findings: Implications for Research & Practice

L/L program influences on critical thinking ability:

- Key is peer environment
- L/L programs should facilitate
 - Study group formation
 - Opportunities for students to discuss social/cultural issues

NSLLP Next Steps

- Continue data analysis
 - Next, continue to refine two typologies of L/L programs
 - Also which LLP components predict persistence, achievement, other learning outcomes?
- Conduct longitudinal analysis on 2004 sample
- Select 3-5 campuses for “best practices” site visits
- Conduct new data collection for new participating schools

Other Sources of Information Related to the NSLLP

- Our website: www.livelearnstudy.net (including our annotated bibliography)



- Published journal articles and conference presentations

